



# UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

## Second Quarter Statewide "Bed Tax" Collections Up

Montana's tourism "bed tax" collections for the second quarter (April, May and June) of 2002 were up 12% compared to the same time period last year. \$3,014,489 million in statewide "bed tax" monies were collected in 2002 compared to \$2,693,294 million in 2001. Statewide collections for the first six months of the year were up 8% from 2001.

The state's six tourism regions all reported collection increases for the second quarter. Custer Country led the tourism regions with 36% growth, while Yellowstone Country was up 13%. Gold West increased 5% with Glacier and Russell Countries up 2%. Missouri River Country reported a 1% increase.

"We know for a fact that the American Bowling Congress tournament hosted by the city of Billings contributed substantially to the collections in Billings and Custer Country," said Betsy Baumgart, Montana Promotion

Division Administrator. "However, the growth of collections in our other tourism regions tells us that our message is getting out that Montana is a desirable vacation destination in the late spring months."

Big Sky had a whopping 75% increase in collections due to favorable April ski conditions and the bowling tournament gave Billings a 45% boost. Great Falls and Missoula grew by 9%, while West Yellowstone was up 8% and Helena reported 5% growth. Whitefish increased collections by 4% and Bozeman's collections were up 2%. Butte held even and Kalispell reported a 3% decline.

Baumgart is optimistic that "bed tax" collections for the summer months will translate into a successful tourism year. She explains that preliminary reports show visitation numbers up in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and other major attractions like the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, Virginia/Nevada City, and Little Bighorn National Monument. "We are hopeful these higher numbers represent a trend across the state." The final summer numbers should be available in December.

"bed tax" grant funds assist the completion of tourism-related facility improvements.

The TIIP grant recipients were selected from 37 applications requesting over \$1.7 million in grant funds to help complete \$6.3 million worth of tourism-related projects.

Here's a summary of the four 2002/03 TIIP projects:

■ \$50,000—Livingston Depot

Foundation for structural repairs and stabilization of the historical Livingston Depot Complex.

■ \$50,000—Conrad Mansion, Kalispell, for a new roof on this historical mansion.

■ \$29,000—Children's Museum of Montana, Great Falls, to build a new stairway to the museum building's second floor so the public can access this space.

■ \$21,000—Phillips County Historical Society, Malta, for restoration and landscaping of the historical Robinson House facility next to the Phillips County Museum.

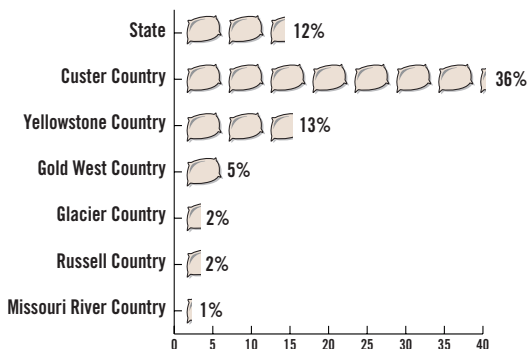
Since 1995, TIIP grants have provided \$1.66 million in tourism "bed tax" funds to 35 projects in 26 Montana communities. The total cost of the projects assisted with TIIP funds is over \$21 million. TIIP grant funds are provided by the state's 4 percent tourism "bed tax" which is assessed on the lodging price of all accommodations across Montana, including campgrounds. The grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a \$1 local match for every \$2 provided by grant funds.

## TIIP Grants Awarded

The Livingston Depot Complex, Kalispell's Conrad Mansion, the Children's Museum of Montana in Great Falls, and Malta's Phillips County Historical Society have been awarded \$150,000 in grant funds from the Montana Commerce Department's Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP). The tourism

## Montana Hits the Jackpot

Pam Gosink, Travel Montana's Group and Overseas Marketing Manager, attended the "Visit US Expo" in Las Vegas, Nevada, September 2-5. Pam met with 39 tour operators from Taiwan, Philippines, China, Korea and America-based Japan tour com-



## Did You Know?

- Lone Mountain Ranch was voted the best Nordic ski area in North America by a consumer poll in *Cross Country Skier* magazine.
- Northwest Airlines has expanded air service to Helena
- The American Bus Association chose Custer's Last Stand Reenactment and the Lewis and Clark Festival in Great Falls as the top 100 annual events in North America for 2003.

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panies. The "Expo" leads are available at [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/OverseasMarketing.htm](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/OverseasMarketing.htm). The password to access the leads is "overseas". For more information contact Pam Gosink at [pam@visitmt.com](mailto:pam@visitmt.com) or 406-841-2894.

## A Culture All Its Own

Over 50 Montanans participated in the October 9-10, North Central Montana Cultural Corridor Development Workshop in Fort Benton. The workshop benefited from a good representation of area artists, crafts people, chamber and economic development representatives along with participants from Livingston, Thompson Falls, and Bozeman. Becky Anderson of North Carolina's successful HandMade in America program and Beth Russell-Towe of the Alberta-British Columbia-Montana Trail of the Great Bear were the featured presenters. The two-day workshop resulted in the creation of three teams of corridor leaders who will be working on developing cultural tourism corridors along Highway 87 (Great Falls to Havre); Highway 2 (Havre to Browning); and a Great Falls-based loop that ties in the Choteau, Sun River Valley, and Cascade areas. Participants left the workshop with a good sense of what cultural tourism corridors were all about and what they needed to do to put them together.

The Missoula Cultural Council is finalizing details for its workshop scheduled for November 14-15 at the Holiday Inn Parkside in Missoula. This workshop will also focus on creating tourism corridors and loop tour routes to and from Missoula. For more infor-

mation and details about this workshop, contact Mark Martin, Missoula Cultural Council, (406) 721-9620, [mcc@missoulacultural.org](mailto:mcc@missoulacultural.org).

## Write On Media Covers the Map

Travel Montana's Publicity Office and the state's six tourism regions hosted 35 travel writers on 11 organized familiarization/media tours this summer and fall. The writers discovered Montana's wonders by foot, bike, horseback, canoe and mini van.

The publications and broadcast outlets that were represented on these tours include:

Newspapers: *Toronto Sun*, Alameda Newspaper Group, *Edmonton Sun Journal*, *Globe and Mail*, North Idaho Newspapers and *Washington Post*.

Magazines: *Coast to Coast*, *Home & Away*, *Trailer Life*, *Horizon Air*, *Mountain Living*, *Persimmon Hill*, *True West*, *World and I*, *Destination*, *Travel America*, *Outside*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Gente Viaggi*.

Other: *Fodor's Guide on National Parks of the West*, Road to Adventure.com, and the northern California public radio program *Radio Curious*.

In addition, the Publicity Office assisted over 25 individual writers and broadcast producers on a range of Montana topics from the following: *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, *Calgary Herald*, Cleveland area *News-Herald*, *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *Sunset*, *Memphis Parent*, *Fish and Fly*, *Links*, *Orange County Metro Plus*, *Senior Life*, *Travelscope* radio program, Montana Public Television, ESPN, and The Outdoor Life Network.

## Montana's Show-Offs

You could say that Group Travel Specialist Marlee Iverson is a real show-off. Well at least Marlee loves to show off Montana. She recently represented the state at two meetings and convention trade shows. Marlee and fellow show-offs Linda Anderson, Executive Director of Glacier Country and Jennifer Bingham, Manager of the Helena Convention Visitor Bureau attended the Affordable Meetings National Trade Show in Washington D.C., September 4-5. At Chicago's Incentive Travel & Meeting Executives show September 24-26, Marlee and Linda were joined by Gayle Fisher, Executive Director of Russell Country and Marne Hayes, Executive Director of the Big Sky Chamber.

Montana was well received at both locales and the group came back with some valuable leads. If you are interested in pursuing some of the leads, you can find them on our Intranet site, [travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us), under our programs, meetings & conventions, or by contacting Marlee at 406-841-2895 or [marlee@visitmt.com](mailto:marlee@visitmt.com).

*Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.*

## Calendar of Events

### November

- 7-13 National Tour Association Convention (NTA)—Los Angeles
- 10 Montana Night at NTA
- 21 Regions and CVBs Meeting, Helena

*For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:*  
**[travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us).**



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**Montana Department of Commerce**

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